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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1534
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 6649
RUEUITH/AFOSI 52 FIS ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001782

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: DTP RESIGNS EN MASSE; CONTINUED VIOLENCE

TESTS AKP'S RESOLVE ON KURDISH INITIATIVE

REF: A. ANKARA 1765

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1749

[1](#)C. ANKARA 1743

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Former Democratic Society Party (DTP) parliamentarians decided to submit their resignations en masse to the Turkish Grand National Assembly on December 15 following the Constitutional Court decision closing the party for ties to the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Former members of the DTP immediately re-formed under the umbrella of the DTP's shadow party, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Former DTP members and the PKK's political wing, the KCK, condemned the Court's decision as illegal, and vowed to continue to fight for the rights of Turkey's Kurds -- the DTP through peace and democracy and the KCK through violence. Protests continued across the country, and clashes between police and protestors turned violent in many instances. The BDP could either continue to align itself openly with the PKK, as the DTP did in the late days, or take a more moderate and inclusive stance. The former is more likely than the latter, which will further test the GOT's resolve to proceed with its National Unity Project. END SUMMARY.

DTP Resigns En Masse

[1](#)2. (SBU) After a day-long meeting in Diyarbakir on December 14 to discuss the fate of the DTP, the 19 MPs from the party who had not been banned decided to follow through with their threat to resign en masse. They are expected to submit their resignations to the parliament soon. It is unclear whether the parliament will accept the resignations. (Note: A simple majority vote of parliament is required to accept an MP's resignation. End note.) While announcing the resignations, former chairman of the DTP Ahmet Turk and banned former MP Aysel Tugluk both stated that the Constitutional Court decision was "unlawful" and they would not recognize it. Tugluk went further, spouting the extremist DTP line that the Kurdish issue could only be resolved if the government took jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as an interlocutor. The crowd that gathered at the press conference chanted pro-PKK and pro-Ocalan statements. PKK leader Murat Karaliyan earlier that day said the Court decision was illegal and stressed that the MPs should resign en masse.

13. (SBU) Members of the DTP have re-formed under the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), a shadow party created specifically to carry on the same cause in the event the DTP was shut down. Former members of the DTP who hold public office now serve under the aegis of the BDP, except for the mayors who were banned from political party activity for five years who will remain in their positions as independents.

Violent Protests Continue

14. (SBU) Increasingly violent protests continued across the country on December 14 and 15. Events over the weekend in Istanbul came to a head on December 13 when DTP protestors began to throw stones and were challenged by counter-protestors who came out in force with knives and pistols. Police disbursed both sides with tear gas and water cannons. Press reports alleged that someone "in a black car" had paid the counter-protestors and had provided them with pistols, asking them to use them against the DTP protestors.

15. (SBU) On December 15 in Mus, at least two people were killed and eight injured when shop owners shot at DTP supporters who had thrown stones and broken windows of official buildings, banks and shops in the town. The KCK issued a statement asking Kurds across Turkey to step up their protest efforts against the Court's decision. A group of intellectuals released a statement on December 15 asking the government, the parliament and the DTP to resolve the problems and end the protests. The group worried that the closure of the DTP raised the danger of progressively more

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violent protests across the country.

Comment

16. (C) The newly formed BDP seems inclined, sadly, to follow the DTP's path of closure. Moderate voices inside the DTP were effectively silenced in the weeks leading up to the Court's decision, and those voices are unlikely to prevail in the BDP with the removal of Ahmet Turk. The Emine Ayna wing of the DTP appears to have won the philosophical fight, and probably will align the new party closely with the desires of the PKK and KCK, focusing on the demands of Ocalan above all else. Security forces so far have shown relative restraint against the latest protests. The worst of the problems seems to be coming from rival groups within the Kurdish community who seem determined to foment civil unrest. In addition, Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP) leaders continue to exploit the situation.

8.(C) PM Erdogan and other AKP leaders have reasserted their commitment to continuing the National Unity Project, but the latest moves from BDP leaders will sorely test their resolve. The project's intended beneficiaries (former DTP members and supporters) are doing nothing to stop the growing violence. Bitter rhetoric from both sides is escalating tensions. If security forces move to restore peace and order, it may only further destabilize the southeast region whose population is majority Kurdish. President Gul's appeal last week to all parties to end the violence appears "too little, too late" in the current environment. Only the Kurds themselves could possibly defuse the situation, but the PKK is clearly uninterested in doing so and no independent Kurdish voice with clout is willing or able to speak out. Silliman

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